

BIDS FOR TRIAL

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Ray Is Visited By New Lawyer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Lawyer J. B. Stoner said today James Earl Ray told him he was "pressured into a guilty plea" and was innocent of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

NASHVILLE (AP) — James Earl Ray's new lawyer entered the maximum security section of Tennessee's state penitentiary today to talk about Ray's bid for a new trial in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

J. B. Stoner, a Savannah, Ga., attorney long associated with the Ku Klux Klan, entered the prison with warden Lake Russell.

STONER, WHO said he had new information which convinced him Ray did not assassinate King, said he has

been retained by Ray in his bid to have the case reviewed.

Ray pleaded guilty March 10 to a first-degree murder charge that he shot King in Memphis last April 4. Ray was brought here the next day to begin a 99-year prison sentence.

In Chattanooga last night, Stoner, 44, said he will be aided in the case by a Chattanooga lawyer, Robert W. Hill.

"I have some independent information about the Ray case from Memphis," Stoner said. "And from the information I have, I believe it would have been impossible for Ray to have been guilty of having shot King."

STONER SAID he thinks Ray has been pressured into

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whose office is located in the party's headquarters in Savannah, ran for vice-president under the party's banner in 1964.

Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle Jr. of Memphis, who presided in the Ray case, disclosed Wednesday Ray has written him saying he wants to withdraw the guilty plea and stand trial.

BATTLE SAID Ray also wrote that he has fired his attorney, Percy Foreman of Houston. Stoner is Ray's third lawyer. He earlier had dismissed Arthur Hanes, a former Birmingham mayor.

The 99-year prison sentence was prearranged by the state and Foreman, who said he never had hopes of anything more than saving Ray's life.

The sentence prevents Ray from seeking parole for 30 years. Under a life sentence, he would be eligible for parole in 13 years.

RAY WAS reported to have told officers who accompanied him here from Memphis he wished he had taken his chances for a life sentence.

Stoner grew up on a Walker County, Ga., farm just outside Chattanooga. Since boyhood he had been involved in Ku Klux Klan.

At 16, Stoner was an organizer and an officer of a Chattanooga Klan and was once known as the kleagle of Tennessee. He has called himself imperial wizard of the Christian Knights of the Klan and published a Klan newspaper in Louisville, Ky., and Atlanta.

IN 1952, Stoner announced formation of the Christian Anti-Jewish party and urged deportation of Jews and confiscation of their property for distribution to "Christian Americans." The same year he polled 934 votes as a candidate for Congress in the 3rd Congressional District of Tennessee.

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entering the guilty plea because of national publicity which made it impossible for Ray to get a fair trial.

"Certain magazines are part of a conspiracy to libel Ray and deny him a free trial," he said. "This pressured him into pleading guilty."

"I am representing Ray in a libel suit against some national magazines... which have accused him of a crime of which he is not guilty."

He did not name any magazines.

STONER'S entry into the case was announced by Edward R. Fields, director of the militantly segregationist National States Rights party, who said Ray first contacted Stoner after his arrest in London last year.

Stoner, an NSRP attorney